(d) A total of 42 coal blocks including 2 small and isolated patches with geological reserves of approximately 7420 million tonnes have been allocated for commercial mining. Out of these, only 2 small and isolated patches have commenced production and these produced 0.329 million tonnes of raw coal during the year 2007-08, which is lifted and consumed by private sector companies.

(e) The price of coal in international market is very volatile. However, it is gathered from secondary sources that the price of coal produced by the subsidiary coal companies of C1L is cheaper than the price of coal produced in other countries even in energy terms.

(f) The price of coal produced by CIL sources is arrived at taking into consideration the cost of inputs for production of coal, acceptability of coal prices in the market etc.

(g) The pricing of coal is deregulated. The coal companies are empowered to fix the coal price.

Singareni Collieries Co. Ltd. (SCCL)

1875. SHRI N.R. GOVINDARAJAR: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Singareni Collieries Co. Ltd. (SCCL) has decided to bring 'High Wall Mining' technology which undertake mining of thin coal seams with high productivity;

(b) if so, complete details thereof with terms and conditions of the tenders floated for the technology;

(c) whether there have been violation of tender conditions resulting into a loss of more than Rs. 150 crores to Singareni Collieries;

(d) if so, the details thereof; and

(e) whether Government would investigate the procurement process and if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COAL (SHRI SANTOSH BAGRODIA): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. To conserve and facilitate the optimum extraction of valuable coal reserves locked beneath high walls in opencast mines, Singareni Collieries Company Limited (SCCL) had placed an order for production of coal using high wall mining technology on M/s. Advanced Mining Technology Pvt. Ltd. Hyderabad with the following criteria stipulated for the above technology provider:—

(1) Eligibility:

(i) Manufacturer having major equipment in the proposed technology for at least 5 years. OR

(ii) Successfully operated in operation of the proposed method of mining for at least 5 years. OR

(iii) In case of a bidder, not falling in clause (a) or (b) above the bidder should have a legally binding agreement with the manufacturer mentioned at clause (a) or operation mentioned at clause (b) above. Such agreement should confirm that the bidder would have the necessary services from such organization upto the period of this contract.

(2) Scope of Work: The scope of work includes the following:—

Phase-I:

Conducting site scientific investigations, Preparing study report, Design and obtaining Director General of Mines Safety (DGMS) approval for technology and equipment.

Phase-II:

Mining contract for production of coal on Cost at per tonne basis. The payment for the Phase-I work will be payable after obtaining the permission from DGMS for coal production. 25% of the total amount would be paid on getting DGMS approval for each project in sequence of operation. These studies shall be completed in 4 months.

(3) Payment Methodology:

Payment for production of coal will be made on fortnightly basis for the coal produced during the 15 days within the next 15 days.

Basis of payment would be on tonnage produced by arranging a Belt Weigher OR on surveyed volume calculated on the agreed survey method.

(c) and (d) There has been no violation of tender conditions and no amount has been paid so far by SCCL to the agency.

(e) Does not arise in view of reply given to part (c) and (d) above.

Telecom services in rural areas

1876. SHRI AMIR ALAM KHAN: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) the number of villages in the country lacking telecom facility;

(b) whether Government has directed private telephone operators to provide telecom services in rural and remote areas;

(c) if so, the details thereof;

(d) whether the private telecom operators are complying with the said directives of Government; and

(e) the efforts being made by Government to take advantage of telecom revolution to all the villages in India?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (SHRI JYOTIRADITYA MADHAVRAO SCINDIA): (a) There are 5,93,601